STRANGE NEWS FROM PLYMOUTH:

OR,

A Wonderful and Tragical RELATION of a VOYAGE FROM THE INDIES,

Where by Extraordinary Hardships, and the Extremities of the late great Frost, several of the Seamen and others Miserably Perish'd; and for want of Provision, Cast-Lots for their Lives, and were forced to Eat one another; And how a *Dutch* Merchant Eat part of his own Children, and then Murdered himself because he would not Kill his Wife: with the Miraculous Preservation of *George Carpinger* an *English* Seaman, and the *Dutch* Merchants Wife, now a Shore at *Plymouth*.

In a Letter to Mr. D. B. *of* London, *Merchant.*

LONDON, Printed for *J. Conyers* at the *Black-Raven* in *Duck-Lane*, 1684.

Nov 15

STRANGE NEWS
FROM
PLYMOUTH:
OR,
A Wonderful and Tragical
RELATION of a VOYAGE
FROM THIS
INDIES,

BODLEIAN
2 JAN 1935
LIBRARY

Strange News from Plymouth: *Or, a Wonderful and Tragical Relation of a Voyage from the* Indies, *&c.*

SIR,

ACcording to promise in my last, I have inquired into the particulars of that so Tragical Relation therein mentioned, the which (without any Prologue) I shall lay down in its Naked Truth, as I had the same from the mouth of the Survivours who are now at my House, which if you please take as follows: — A Gentleman called the *Heer van Effall* Native of the Low-Countries, having had the Education of a Merchant at home, was resolved to improve his Patrimony in some Forreign Parts: To which end, being thereunto the more Encouraged by the promise of a strict Correspondence with several of his Countrymen, he undertook a Voyage to the *Indies*, whither he Arrived about the year 1670. And by the Industrious Management of his Affairs, increased his Estate so considerably, that few Men in those parts Lived in greater splendor, being thus seated about 7 years, afterwards he came acquainted with the Daughter of a *Dutch* Merchant of great Fortune, a Gentlewoman of many worthy Accomplishments, and exceeding Beautiful, our Merchant being much taken with her Port and Beauty, made his Addresses to her, and resolving to change his Condition, found her not altogether averse to his Happiness, which by degrees he raised to Consent, and obtain'd Her for his Wife, with whom he lived very happily for several years, till he had increased his Estate to such a Portion as made him think to return to his own Country where he first drew Breath, and had left his Relations, Communicating which Design to his Lady, she readily assented to the Voyage, and accordingly he made preparation to gather his Estate into a Bottom, and take leave of the *Indies*, which in a short time he Effected, and being supplied

with a Vessel that had discharged her self at the said Port, he hired the same for *Rotterdam*, and therein Imbarked himselfe, his Wife, two Children, and one Servant, with all his Estate, which amounted to a very considerable Cargoe, and in *August* last took Shipping. The flattering Sea which too often beguiles us to our undoing, promised him for the two first months a very happy Voyage, and fill'd his Heart with hopes of touching the Shore, the long absence of his Friends rendred very desirable to him, and Buoy'd up with the expectation of a happiness cruel Fate had design'd to deprive him off, was on a sudden becalm'd, insomuch that for several weeks they could scarce tell whether they were forwarded a Leagues space, in which time the sixteen Seamen and Master that was one Board, by a Disease that increased amongst them, several Dyed, and by Degrees their Provision growing short, they were forced to deal the same more sparingly about, hoping by their care they might have enough to serve them thro their Voyage, and made the best way they could to their desired Port; yet such was their misfortune, that they were failed of their expectation, and came to see the last of what they had spent, and for four days lived without any sustenance, and the Wind being Cross they could not make Land, where they might revictual, but were forced to keep on their Voyage. Their extreamity was such that the two Children not so well able to bear the hardship as others, both died, on whose Bodies notwithstanding the Tears and Entreaties of the Merchant and his Wife they were forced to feed, which being in a short time consumed, it came to be considered, having no sight nor hope of any shore, that they must either all of them submit to the Fate that threatned them, or contrive some other method to save themselves, which at present they had not the least prospect of, unless in the common Calamity, they consented by Lot or otherwise to destroy some one in the number to save the rest, which unwillingly they were at length inforced to, and Joyntly agreed, that according to the number then a Board, they should number

so many Lots, and on whom number 1 fell, he should be slain, and number 2 should be his Executioner. But here a Dispute arose, whether the Merchants Wife whose two Children had to her great grief been already Eaten, and in favour to her Sex, should not be Exempted from the Fatall Lot, some were of the opinion she ought, and particularly one *George Carpinger*, a stout *English* Seaman, used his endeavours to work the Company to Assent thereunto; but as nothing is so Voracious or Cruell as the Jaws of Hunger on the one hand, or so Estimable as Life on the other, he could not Effect his Design, so that the majority having over-ruled his Arguments, they drew in common, and such was their misfortune, that the Lot fell on the woman for Death, and on her Husband for Executioner; miserable was the Lamentation of the Husband and Wife, that so fatal a Mischance should for ever part them, yet Teares and Entreaties were ineffectual, so that nothing but submission was left, tho the Merchants Servant and *Carpinger* stood resolutely against the rest, and resolved to spare them, which the Merchant perceiving, and knowing their force was too little to accomplish their wishes, with a settled Countenance, spake to them to the following purport: *Honest Friends, for such you have approved your selves to me, you have seen the hardship of my Fate, and since 'tis drove to this point, I am resolved never to be her Executioner, who hath been so loving and just a Wife to me, but in her stead am resolved my self the Sacrifice, and therefore, what I have to say to you is, that you stand her Friends when I am Dead, what is in this Vessel, does as you know belong to me, spare nothing of it to serve Her, and with these Notes, if ever that Arrive at* Rotterdam, *tho all in this Cargoe be lost, you shall be plentifully Rewarded*: which after he had said, and they with Teares had heard, being about to Answer him, he drew a Pistol from his Pocket, which he so unexpectedly discharged, they had not time to prevent it, and shot himself in the Head, of which Wound he Immediately Dyed.

The

The Cry they made at his Fall, and the noise of the Pistol was quickly heard to the rest of the Ships Crew, which soon called them thither; Nor was his Wife long absent, who poor Lady had been preparing her self for her end, which by this less pleasing Disaster she saw prevented. The Tears she shed and extravagancies she acted at so Dismal a Tragedy, were but needless to recount, since none so hard-hearted but might in some Measure Judge; She Swounded and almost Dyed with Grief, and beg'd to be her own Executioner, but she was too narrowly watch'd by her Servant and *Carpinger* to effect so cruel a purpose; their Eyes never left her, and their cares more for her Preservation then their own, but in vain was all their watchfulness against the Enemy from without, when she Harboured in her own Breast a Foe sufficient to destroy a greater strength then Grief had left her, for no entreaties could perswade her to Feed on that dear Corps she had so often cherrished, but what share thereof the hardship of her Fate allowed her for her Food, she Embalmed with her Tears, and by renew'd Vows promised to share Fortunes with it, and be Buryed in the same unwonted Grave in which that Flesh was distributed, she once so much admir'd, which she had near accomplish'd, having had no Food in that time but two Rats which were Fortunately taken, and Presented to her by *Carpinger*) at such time as the Fatal Lot was to take its second round, in which she was resolved to share notwithstanding all the entreaties of *Carpinger* and her Servant, and in short, she had her wish, and drew again a Second time her own Sentence, which she welcom'd more then Bridal-days, and being just ready to yield her Throat to the Executioners Knife, she had certainly Fell, had not *Carpinger* with two more whom he hired, stept in and resolutely withstood the Execution; Upon which Quarrel they drew their Falchions, and four Persons were Slain, amongst whom the Faithful Servant was one. This was a sufficient Morsel for the present, and staid the Bloody Hunger of the Survivors, who were now reduced to 5 or 6 Persons besides the Lady, with

the Bodies of the Slain they were then Fed more plenteously then for some Months proceeding, but such was the Rigour of their Fate, that by the unusual Dyet most of their Men were Dead, just as they got sight of the Lands end of *England*, and having but very few hands to work their Vessel, they found that from the dangers they had been so long in, a second threatned them from the Severity of the late Season, for the Ice being there in very great Flakes, they found themselves drove amidst the same towards the Shore, from whence they could not disingage the Ship, in which time *Carpinger* (being a Person of a Valuable Tongue, and formerly well bred about *Stepney* in *London*, where his Father Captain *Carpinger* had long Lived) used all the Consolation he could, by Words, or Devise, to Comfort the Despairing Lady, till at length she was prevailed to hearken to him, and give her promise to spare all violence on her self, and waite her better Fortune, in this Case they lay for six days, till all but two Persons besides themselves were Dead, and these so Miserably weak they could not leave their Cabbins, so that being Froze in, that they could not stir, *Carpinger* with the Lady resolved to venture on the Ice, and set forward towards the Shore, which she the rather undertook for that she [illegible] to find a Grave in those Waves in which she had lost what she loved above her own Preservation, with this Resolution *Carpinger* taking charge of the Lady got a Planck and a long Pole in his Hand, and with these left the Ship, and with great danger and difficulty in six hours got safe to Shore, having opportunity only of saving a Casket of Jewels, which he brought off with him, where at my own House the said Parties do now remain, in reasonable Health. And considering the care and kindness of *Carpinger*, the Lady seems much to Favour him, and when the time of Mournings over, will undoubtedly make him Happy in her Embraces.

SIR,

SIR,

You may according to the Credit I have with you, Communicate this to the Publick, if you think fit, after Easter *I intend to see you at* London, *and in the mean time, I am,*

Your Servant,

Plymouth, Feb. 3d. 1683. J. G.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Should have given you some Account of the Ship called the *De Ruyter* of *Rotterdam*, which we see at a distance, but as yet the Frost is so hard we cannot get to her, but have small hopes of Preserving her.

I. G.

This Relation is Justified for Truth.

By Us, { John Cross, William Atkins, } Seamen.

FINIS.